California GARDEN

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 1984
Seventy-five Cents
VOLUME 75 NO. 6
ISSN 0008-1116

The first in the nation electrically lighted Christmas tree.
Hotel Del Coronado — 1904

HORTICULTURE CALENDAR

Nov 1, 8, 15
San Diego Floral Event

THURSDAY WORKSHOP WITH COLLEEN WINCHELL
Free Floral Crafts Instruction - Open to the Public, San Diego Floral Association Library
Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Info: 479-6433

Nov 3

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN ANNUAL NATIVE CALIFORNIA PLANT SALE
1500 North College Ave., Claremont, Calif.
Saturday: 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Nov 3, 4

SAN DIEGO TROPICAL FISH 14TH ANNUAL AQUARIUM SHOW
Casa del Prado, Majorca Room, Balboa Park
San Diego
Sat: Noon to 6:00 p.m. Sun: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Free

Nov 6, 13, 27
San Diego Floral Event

FLOWER ARRANGING WITH ADRIENNE
Casa del Prado, Majorca Room, Balboa Park
San Diego
Tuesday: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Info: 296-2757 or 298-5182

Nov 10, 11

HEARTLAND AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY AND QUAIL BOTANICAL GARDENS FOUNDATION "GREEN THUMB" SHOW
San Diego Wild Animal Park, Escondido, Calif.
Sat. & Sun: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Nov 17, 18

SAN DIEGO COUNTY ORCHID SOCIETY ANNUAL FALL MINI-SHOW
Casa del Prado, Majorca Room, Balboa Park
San Diego, Calif.
Sat: Noon to 4:30 p.m. Sun: 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Free

Nov 17, 18

CROWN GARDEN CLUB'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION "HOLIDAY SHOWCASE"
A Flower and Horticultural Exhibit
Coronado Public Library, 640 Orange Ave.
Coronado, Calif.
Sat: 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Sun: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Free

Nov 25

NINTH ANNUAL SUMI-E PAINTING AND IKEBANA ARRANGEMENT SHOW
Casa del Prado, Majorca Room, Balboa Park
San Diego, Calif.
Sunday: 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Free

Dec 2

"CHRISTMAS IN FLOWERLAND" PLANT SALE AND BAZAAR
Quail Botanical Gardens Foundation
230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas, Calif.
Sunday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Free

(Continued on Page 183.)

California GARDEN

SINCE 1909

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NOVEMBER—DECEMBER 1984

VOLUME 75 NUMBER 6

CONTENTS

169	DECK THE HALLS WITH HOLLY	ROSALIE GARCIA
171	POPULAR INDOOR PLANTS	ALLETHE MACDONALD
175	BASIC CULTURE FOR INDOOR PLANTS	MIKE LUDWIG & ALLETHE MACDONALD
177	THE COSMOS	BILL GUNTHER
179	DESERT HOLLY	TOM OBERBAUER
180	HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS	SHARON SIEGAN
185	A WINDCHIME GARDEN	JUNE W. RODGERS
187	50 YEARS AGO	CAROL GREENTREE
189	BOOK REVIEWS	SHARON SIEGAN
190	NOW IS THE TIME	PENNY BUNKER
194	YEAR 1984 INDEX SUBJECT/AUTHOR	

Front Cover: The first electrically lighted Christmas Tree. Hotel Del Coronado—1904. Ilse Scheer has graciously shared her artistry with *California Garden* magazine for ten years.

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DECK THE HALLS WITH HOLLY

Rosalie Garcia

"Deck the Halls with Holly," an old English song seems to usher in the Christmas Season throughout many parts of the world. Although in southern California the holly tree is not a common one, it will grow here, as it does in all the temperate zones of the world. Because most of the hundreds of species are green throughout the year may be the reason for its being adapted as a Christmas green. Since the beginning of the Christian Era, holly has been used in conjunction with celebrations of the birth of Christ. Ceremonies which took place around holly trees in Central Europe during the winter solstice are recorded in legends and history. These customs were carried to England and finally to Colonial America.

As a child in our village we always had a community Christmas tree at one of the two churches. It was the beginning and the highlight of the season. One time we had a magnificant holly tree which almost turned out to be a disaster. It was shiny green, full of red berries, and as usual of baubles and presents, so the children could not resist exploratory "feels." Soon there were squalling youngsters all over who had been stuck by thorny leaves, and monitors were appointed to keep the children away from the tree until Santa arrived. I was a monitor with a long stick which I swung menacingly and importantly. Since the children could not roll around under the tree and "feel" everything, it was not a successful evening. The following years we went back to the traditional cedars or pines which after all smelled so delicious when the real candles were lighted and warmed up the oils in these resinous conifers.

In 1957 the American Horticultural Society devoted its January issue to hollies. It is the most thorough study of the genus *Ilex* I could find in several libraries. It is both technical and general so anyone can read it with understanding and pleasure. It also devoted one chapter to the historical place of hollies in legend, myth, and history in many countries: holly was even used to brew tea; it is still used as the mate of South American countries; the wood is carved into ivorylike jewelry.

I am sure botanists will be squabbling to the end of time over trying to classify the many species of holly, for its habits and ability to mutate is running them crazy. Not all hollies have thorny leaves and some are deciduous. There are some with yellow berries and others with blue-black berries. Some are trees; some are shrubs, and all of them can be grown as shrubs, but even the shrubs will get to be treelike if growing conditions are very favorable. So how can one keep up with them? Watch this genus. There is no telling what its future will be.

THE ENGLISH HOLLIES ARE TO MOST PEOPLE THE RICHEST AND PRETTIEST OF ALL THE HOLLIES.

Two groups of hollies we are more familiar with are the American and the English. Since the beginnings of both are so shrouded in history and myth, we cannot trace their origins too far back. The English hollies, in my judgement, are really the richest and prettiest. Some of the most beautiful are the variegated ones of which there are many varieties. The leaves can be striped, spotted, edged with white, pink, or purple, all unpredictable. Some of these not only have spines on the edges of the leaves but have small ones on the leaf surface. So it is no wonder that most animals no matter how

hungry, let them alone. These spines have probably been a factor in the long survival of this species.

Our own American hollies grow in washes, on ditch banks, or just about anywhere in the wild throughout the temperate zone. Many are in the Northwest and Appalachian areas and on the Atlantic Coast. Along rivers and creeks in the South, shrubby hollies abound in thickets where the wild animals have lairs and birds nest and snakes come out when the weather gets warm.

Not so many native hollies are known in North America, around 20 or more. There are evergreen and deciduous ones. The most common evergreen is *Ilex opaca*, which can grow to 50 feet tall. The berries range in color from orange to red and often yellow, and they grow singly instead of in clusters like the English holly. The berries are not edible, though not poisonous, for I am sure I have tried them, and I'm still here.

THE SEXES OF PLANTS OF THE AMERICAN HOLLY (*ILEX OPACA*) ARE APPARENT AT FLOWERING TIME. LEFT, THE MALE FLOWER. RIGHT, THE FEMALE FLOWER. BOTH PLANTS ARE NEEDED FOR FRUITING.

Even though holly trees can be found in the temperate zones, not all of them will grow well or at all in many areas. They grow best in our southern states and in many parts of the West Coast where there is rain or plenty of irrigation. Oregon and parts of Washington have many fine native trees.

If planted and maintained to meet their growing needs, hedges of hollies are excellent and can be kept to any desired height. Very few humans or animals and no vehicles will try to go through a holly hedge. It takes up to 10 years to produce a good hedge and it must not be planted on the property line, for the plant will take up to 4 feet, even if kept trimmed properly. No deciduous ones and not all evergreen hollies are suitable for a hedge. In Colonial days they were used on estates, but one does not see them as often now. There are many faster growing plants that fill the need more quickly.

At the bonsai shows we often see a tiny holly tree. Many types are slow of growth and amendable to training and their foliage and berries are colorful.

The availability of small trees and branches for the Christmas trade has made people aware of the beauty of hollies. A thriving industry has developed, especially in Washington and Oregon as well as in coastal northern California, to grow holly trees. Many of them go to cities in the Midwest and East where a small branch is treasured. Holly dries very well and although it loses its shiny green color, there is a waxy gray-green that lasts. I have a 2½-foot symmetrical branch that I bought at a garden club sale last year which has stayed on my desk and is pretty yet. I set it in a green pot and there it has stayed. It did not have berries, but the leaves have not fallen and I have enjoyed it all year without having to water or even dust it.

There is nothing like holly to give lasting pleasure!

Editor's note: This article, the last one Rosalie wrote, came to me only a few days before her demise.

ROSALIE GARCIA
1901–1984

Rosalie Garcia has written, in her own inimitable style, articles for *California Garden* magazine since 1964 on subjects ranging from the lowly squash to exotic tropical plants. Rosalie had an unusual love and understanding of horticulture which she graciously shared with everyone, giving her the deepest admiration of all the garden-oriented organizations in which she was so active.

Her contributions and dedication to *California Garden* and the San Diego Floral Association have become a part of their heritage.

A.M.

POPULAR INDOOR PLANTS

Allethe Macdonald

FALSE ARALIA, *DIZYGOTHECA ELEGANTISSIMA.* This shrub with the dizzy name is grown in the juvenile stage as an indoor plant. Its gracefully drooping very narrow leaflets with notched edges are dark shiny green above and reddish beneath.

Give it ample light and warmth, but not direct sun; a fast draining but moisture retentive soil is essential. Dry or waterlogged soil will cause the leaves to drop. Feed every two weeks with ¼ strength fertilizer.

This plant may be pruned once a year in a strategic place to put foliage along the whole plant. A more handsome plant has three trunks. To get the trunks to grow at staggered heights, cut back the tallest one at the base each year or so. A single shoot will sprout quickly from the trunk base beneath the cut and grow straight up. Propagation mainly is by hardwood cuttings.

BOSTON FERN, *NEPHROLEPIS EXALTATA* cv 'Bostoniensis.' Boston fern has a spreading and arching habit, with graceful, eventually drooping fronds. With proper care it is a vigorous fern.

Keep the soil evenly moist at all times, but do not keep the pot standing in a saucer of water. Water when the soil surface feels dry. Feed weekly with 1/8 strength fertilizer. Provide the maximum of light, away from direct sunlight, which will scorch the foliage. Too heavy shade results in soft foliage.

Take care not to overpot; these ferns seem to do best when their roots are a little cozy. When it is necessary to repot, only use one size larger pot and well-draining potting mix. Water thoroughly with a fine spray and return the plant to a warm and humid, shaded location. Humidity is especially important.

CHINESE EVERGREEN, *AGLAONEMA MODESTUM* (often sold as *A. simplex*). A tropical plant, originally ranging from China to Thailand, has green stems 2 to 3 feet long with shiny green leaves and miniature greenish white blooms resembling calla lilies. All aglaonemas will thrive in dim light and dry air, making them easily grown plants for problem locations. They need rich porous soil and frequent waterings, but they will survive with less water. They grow equally well in water without soil.

Fertilize weekly with ¼ strength fertilizer.

CORDYLINE is an evergreen palmlike plant similar to and often confused with dracaenas. As a group they tolerate low light intensity except *C. terminalis* 'Tricolor.'

AGLAONEMA MODESTUM (INFLORESCENCE)

'Tricolor' has a very colorful rosette of broad leaves beautifully variegated red, pink, and cream over a base of fresh green. Strong light is needed to bring out the colors of the foliage. Warmth too, with good humidity is essential. Regular feedings keep the plants in good condition.

CROTON, *CODIAEUM VARIEGATUM.* Croton is the name almost universally used for these highly ornamental foliage plants with variegated leaves in beautiful colors; the greens and yellows of the young leaves often change to shades of red. They are natives of southern India, Sri Lanka, and Malaya. As indoor plants they need a humid atmosphere, good light, and a little shade from strong summer sun. Soil should be fertile, loamy, porous, and well draining. The soil should feel dry before watering, but be generous when you do water. Do not keep the soil constantly soggy. Spraying the foliage early in the day so it will be dry by night is beneficial.

Well-established plants that have filled their container with roots can be kept in good condition with a weekly feeding of ¼ strength fertilizer. Repot when necessary, but do not distrub the roots more than necessary.

Spider mites can be a problem. Use a miticide

containing kelthane as an active ingredient.

FLORIST CYCLAMEN, *CYCLAMEN PERSICUM*. These tuberous-rooted perennials from the Eastern Mediterranean area are grown for their abundance of lovely blooms in salmon, crimson, red, purple, or white on 6- to 8-inch stems from fall until spring. Cyclamens are best in filtered or partial shade with some morning sun. Keep the plants well watered; the soil should be moist but not soggy; good drainage is a necessity. They cannot take dryness and will dehydrate if neglected when in bloom.

Feed weekly from fall until spring with ¼ strength liquid fertilizer, such as fish emulsion; be careful not to allow it to touch the crown of the plant. Nip off old, yellowed leaves and flower stems at their base; they tend to become mushy and lead to crown rot if not removed. At this time they are going dormant; reduce watering and just keep the soil moistened until early fall when new growth appears. In late summer it is well to add some new potting mix, being careful not to cover the top of the tuber. One may gently scrape off some of the old mix, taking care not to disturb the roots, or repot in porous soil rich in humus. Set the tuber about half out of the soil to prevent crown rot.

Cyclamens prefer a cooler environment and they will bloom better if kept in a cool place, as a porch, away from heated rooms.

DIEFFENBACHIA an evergreen foliage plant from tropical America has fleshy stems and large, handsome broad leaves in strikingly variagated colors that range from dark green to yellow-green and chartreuse with variegations in white or pale cream.

Sap from the stems will burn the mouth and throat and may paralyze the vocal cords for a period of time, approximately three days.

Give them ample north light and water only when the surface of the soil feels dry. They will not withstand constant overwatering, but they will recover from severe wilting, if properly cared for again. Protect plants from drafts and temperatures below 60° F. at night. To keep plants healthy, feed every one to two weeks with ¼ strength fertilizer. Occasionally spider mites attack dieffenbachia.

Old leggy plants may be cut back to 6 inches above the soil line; they will usually resprout with multiple stems. Repot in a well-draining mix when the roots start pushing the plant up in the pot. After repotting, the plant often sends out new basal shoots.

Many of the newer varieties branch more freely, which keeps them fuller.

DRACAENA. Several species of *Dracaena*, varying greatly in size and general appearance, make excellent house plants. Dracaena is the common name often used for a similar palmlike plant, *Cordyline*.

Cornplant, *Dracaena fragrans* has a rosette of rich green cornlike leaves. *D. f.* 'Massangeana' has leaves broadly stripped with yellow down the center. The bloom is very fragrant; the berries (seed capsules) are orange. Both are robust indoor plants that will tolerate a darker location than other dracaenas. A typical plant in an 8-inch pot will bear leaves up to 18 inches long.

Two natives of West Africa are *D. marginata* and *D. surculosa*. *D. marginata*, one of the more popular and easy ones to grow has slender, erect, smooth gray stems with deep glossy green leaves with a margin of purplish red. If the plant grows too tall, cut off the crown and reroot it in perlite or other porous rooting medium. New crowns will appear on the old stem in time.

D. surculosa grows more slowly and is smaller than the others. Its slender erect or spreading stems have dark green leaves spotted with white.

Culture is the same for all varieties. They need fast draining, loamy, fertile soil. Let the top ½ to 1 inch of soil become dry before watering thoroughly so the entire body of soil is saturated. Fertilize weekly with ¼ strength fertilizer.

Plants that have become too tall or leggy may be pruned in the spring when new growth is about to begin. New shoots reach upward, a fact to keep in mind when determining where cuts are to be made.

FLAME VIOLET, *EPISCIA*. Low-growing plants, related to African violets, that have strawberrylike runners bearing plantlets at the tips. The velvety hairy, and beautifully colored leaves are 2 to 5 inches long and 1 to 3 inches wide. Native to Central and South America and the West Indies, episcias are chiefly forest-floor plants. They revel in summer heat with humidity of at least 50 percent and higher is better. Never let the night temperature fall below 65° F.

Give the plants as much light as they will take without damaging the foliage. This encourages blooming, but if foliage is the only objective, they will do nicely with less light and do especially well with artificial light.

Allow the soil to become a little dry between soakings, but do not let the foliage wilt. Use water at or near room temperature and thoroughly soak the soil, but be sure there is good drainage.

Episcias are heavy feeders. Give well established, healthy plants a weekly or biweekly feeding of dilute liquid fertilizer from spring through fall, less often in winter.

Not many plants are as easy to propagate. The plantlets may be planted or rooted stem cuttings. Leaf cuttings also root easily in perlite or other rooting medium.

GERMAN VIOLET, PERSIAN VIOLET. *EXACUM*. The best of this genus is *Exacum macranthum*. Its showy,

FLAME VIOLET, *EPISCIA*
Photo by Betty Mackintosh

large, rich blue blooms, about 2 inches in diameter with a sweet fragrance, are produced over a long period in summer and fall. A native of Ceylon, the plants require a fertile soil that drains readily, good light and a little protection from the strongest sunlight. Keep the soil moderately moist, but not constantly wet, and regular weekly fertilization with ¼ strength fertilizer. Propagation is by stem cuttings in a porous potting soil, or from seed, if one can find them.

WEEPING CHINESE BANYAN. *FICUS BENJAMINA*. *F. benjamina*, one of our most popular indoor plants, belongs to that large group of ornamental figs. It thrives on rich, steadily moist (not wet) soil, frequent light feedings, and plenty of light. It will not do well in a dark location, where there is a draft, soggy soil, or sudden changes in environment. Moving it may cause the leaves to drop, but with care it usually grows a new set. There is some leaf droppage at all times and more leaves seem to drop in the fall; but new leaves are forming all the time, if the plant is given proper care.

Benjamina is prone to red spider mites, if the atmosphere is too dry. New plants are easy to start from semihardwood cuttings taken between May and July.

Creeping fig, *Ficus pumila*, a native of China, Japan, and Australia, this evergreen creeping vine has a most unfiglike habit. These tiny heart-shaped juvenile leaves ultimately grow into large 2- to 4-inch long leathery oblong leaves. Give this fig good light, evenly moist soil, and regular feedings.

FIRECRACKER FLOWER, *CROSSANDRA INFUNDIBULIFORMIS*. This plant from India has gardenialike glossy green leaves that grow in whorls. Its yellow, orange, orange-red, or white blossoms in dense four-sided spikes bloom over a long period in summer. Grow them in warmest areas with good light and high humidity; keep the soil moist but not wet. Fertilize lightly once a week. Young specimens, except *C. guineensis* are pinched occasionally to encourage branching.

C. guineensis, from South Africa, is not more than 6 inches tall and has red hairy stems. The 3- to 5-inch leaves are deep green with pink veins, and the one-half inch slender flowers are a deep lavender.

FITTONIA has a long list of common names: mosiac plant, silver-net plant, nerve plant, silver-threads, and others. A native of the moist forests of the Andes, these plants are low or creeping with white or colored veins. They are easily grown if given an evenly warm temperature, not below 55° F. high humidity, subdued or north light, moist rich organic soil, and regular weekly feedings with ¼ strength fertilizer. It is readily propagated by cuttings taken in the spring.

FITTONIA VERSCHAFFELTII ARGYONCURA
Photo by New York Botanical Garden Illustrated Encyclopedia of Horticulture

(Upper) *PEPEROMIA VERSCHAFFELTII*
(Right) *PHILODENDRON MIDUHOI*
Photos by New York Botanical Garden Illustrated Encyclopedia of Horticulture

GRAPE-IVY, *CISSUS RHOMBIFOLIA*. The best known of the genus *Cissus*, is an evergreen vine from South America, which has leaves consisting of three glossy toothed and pointed leaflets. It can endure heat, dryness, and low light intensity.

Kangaroo vine, *C. antarctica*, a native of Australia grows best where it is cool and has a north light. It needs moisture, but a well-draining soil.

All cissus respond well to plenty of water and regular feeding with diluted fertilizer. Indoor plants are subject to mealybugs. Propagate by cuttings rooted in a porous mix.

ARROWHEAD VINE OR *NEPHTHYTIS AFZELII, SYNGONIUM PODOPHYLLUM*. *N. afzelii* is the name used in the florist and nursery trade for these slow-growing vines from tropical America that are related to the philodendron. They have thick tuberous rootstocks and long-stalked evergreen leaves with arrow-shaped blades. Follow the same culture as for philodendrons.

RADIATOR PLANT. *PEPEROMIA*. These are usually prostrate or trailing evergreen foliage plants. As a group they adapt easily to low light intensity and drier air, although many of them are epiphytes (derive their moisture and nutrients from the air), preferring high atmospheric humidity, but little soil moisture. They demand little in the way of special care and grow so slowly that it is seldom necessary to repot.

Do not overwater. Soft succulent growth and too much moisture encourage stem rot. Do not overfertilize. A light feeding of ½ strength fertilizer every two months is usually sufficient to keep the plants thriving.

Propagation is by cuttings or divisions from the many root crowns.

Watermelon peperomia, *P. argyreia* is a compact rosette of round 3- to 5-inch long, gray-striped leaves on long red stems.

'Emerald Green,' *P. caperata*, has heart-shaped rich green, deeply veined leaves on very short reddish stalks. Plants are only 3 to 4 inches tall. The dense, tiny greenish white flowers appear on small slender spikes.

PHILODENDRON. Everyone grows philodendrons, it seems. These foliage plants, natives of tropical America, have a wide diversity of growth habits, and leaf sizes and shapes. Their chief need is for fertile fairly loose soil that contains an abundance of organic matter, drains freely, and is kept moist, but not waterlogged. They withstand a dryish atomosphere fairly well, but are much more luxurious in one more humid. Set plants back at least 3 feet from glass not screened by blinds or thin draperies. Feed lightly and frequently for good growth and color. Dust or sponge off the leaves about once a month to keep the leaves glossy and discourage pests.

Philodendrons have small root systems so they should not need repotting for two or three years. Most plants drop the lower leaves, leaving bare stems. The plant may be cut back to a short stub so it will start over again; the cut on the vining types will be hidden by its thick foliage. One can air-layer a leafy top, and when it develops roots it can be severed and replanted. They can be grown fron seed, too.

(CONTINUED JAN–FEB 1985 ISSUE)

BASIC CULTURE FOR INDOOR PLANTS

Allethe Macdonald & Mike Ludwig

DRACAENA

THE MAJORITY OF plants that have become more or less adapted to growing indoors has come from a tropical area. To grow one of these plants successfully, one should keep in mind its native habitat, usually a humid forest floor in diffused light.

Basic requirements for growing luxuriant indoor plants are the same as for all plants—water, humidity, light, and nutrients.

WATER: Incorrect watering probably causes more failures in growing house plants than any other factor. Roots of plants cannot breathe in soggy soil, nor can they grow in dry soil. An established plant with an abundance of roots will need water more often than a plant with few roots. Plastic or ceramic containers hold moisture longer than clay pots.

In general, watering should be done in the morning when the temperature is rising; the need for moisture is greater during warm daylight hours. If the soil in the pot is dry one-half inch down, it is time to water. Water when the plant needs it, not on a set schedule or when you feel like it.

Water thoroughly, so the entire root ball is saturated. Almost all tropical plants will benefit from being submerged frequently in a container of water, at room temperature or slightly warmer, until the soil is saturated. Check that all excess water drains away; empty saucers so the container is never left standing in water. Do not use water that has run through a softener; use outside faucet water or rain water, if you are fortunate enough to have it available. It is advisable to draw water four to eight hours prior to use in order to bring it to room temperature and to dissipate the chlorine. Occasionally flood pots with water two or three times to leach out accumulated salts from alkaline water or fertilizers.

HUMIDITY: In few areas of a home or office is the humidity optimum for plants, although humidity of 50 percent is comfortable for both plants and people. Some plants require an even higher humidity. One way to raise the moisture level is to cover the surface of a waterproof tray with pebbles and add enough water to cover the bottom of the tray, but not the pebbles. Place plants on the pebbles and check that the water level never touches the container. Add water as necessary to maintain a level just below the top of the rocks.

When a tropical plant is brought into an environment with a drier atmosphere, reduced light, and less frequent watering, it may suffer shock. Some of the leaves may turn yellow or fall off, and blooms may wilt. It is impossible for the roots to take up moisture rapidly enough to replace that lost by the foliage being exposed to drier atmosphere, despite the fact that it is being well watered. Locate plants away from drafts and where possible keep new plants in a cool environment for three or four days; they will gradually adjust to new surroundings.

A room humidifier or a small vaporizer will add enough moisture to the atmosphere to bring the humidity up to a comfortable 50 percent.

LIGHT: Requirements vary with individual plants. Flowering plants usually require more light to bloom, while those grown for their foliage need diffused light, with the exception of the ones with variegated leaves, which have

few green cells to manufacture enough carbohydrate to maintain healthy growing conditions. It is during periods of maximum light in combination with higher temperatures that the leaves manufacture food for maintenance and growth. At night in the absence of maximum light energy, high temperatures alone will increase respiration.

NUTRIENTS: Almost all plants will thrive with frequent feedings of a well-balanced fertilizer that is diluted to ¼ or ½ the strength recommended by the manufacturer. A weekly or biweekly feeding will give plants a steady supply of nutrients. Fertilizing and watering may be done at the same time by adding fertilizer to the water in the proper proportion. Do not fertilize for a few weeks after repotting; the new potting mix will have the nutrients needed by the plant.

If most or all of the leaves of a plant are yellowish, if it is not making vigorous growth during the season it should be active, and if its poor health is not attributable to unsuitable growing conditions (too hot, too cold, insufficient light, waterlogged soil, dryness at the roots, desiccated air, or the pH is not right), then, in any of these circumstances, a plant needs additional fertilizer. In southern California where there is ample light, continue feeding indoor plants the year around, unless the plant has a definite dormancy period.

COMMON PESTS

APHIDS: These small green or black plant lice are about 1/8 inch in size and are usually found in clusters on soft growing parts of plants. They multiply rapidly, but are easy to control with an old-fashioned remedy of a weak soap solution or a non-oily-base spray with malathion.

MEALYBUGS: Slow-moving pinkish white soft-bodied insects equipped with many leglike filaments cluster at stem joints and underside of leaf stems. The young which emerge from cottony masses are easier to kill; adults are covered with a powdery waxy substance. They infest many indoor plants. Prompt action as soon as they are discovered is essential. When they are few in number adults can be destroyed by touching them with a small cotton ball dipped in alcohol. Be careful not to let alcohol drip on the plant. A forceful syringing with water may dislodge these insects. Chemical sprays are available, and if the infestation is heavy, are the best means of control.

RED SPIDER: A tiny mite that can best be seen with a hand lens. They thrive where the air is hot and dry, and usually live on the underside of leaves. They suck sap from the leaves, which causes speckling and discoloration of the leaf surface. Sponging the leaves occasionally with soapy water will greatly reduce red spider infestation.

If there is any evidence of red spider, mealybug, aphids or scale, add a little insecticide to the soapy water. Good grooming not only helps to keep pests under control, it keeps the plants sparkling.

POTTING MIX

Every serious indoor plant gardener has his own potting mix formula, but there are excellent commercial ones. Be sure to buy a mix that is labeled for indoor plants; it has been sterilized to eliminate pests and diseases. There are many reasons not to use ordinary garden soil, primarily because it is too heavy and it contains too many contaminates.

Read labels for information about the type of mix; usually they recommend the plants for which it is best suited. Nurserymen are always helpful and happy to answer your questions.

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THE COSMOS

Text and photos by Bill Gunther

(Right) THE BUMBLE BEE WHICH IS POLLINATING THIS COSMOS BLOSSOM PROVIDES SIZE PERSPECTIVE. THIS PARTICULAR BLOSSOM IS ABOUT AVERAGE IN SIZE; IT IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SINGLE FORM.

THE SUMMER OF 1984 was the warmest summer in many years for southern California. That fact explains why, during the past season, the cosmos in our gardens grew far taller than usual. There is no mystery to it. The explanation is simple. Without exception, all the garden varieties of cosmos which we grow have been derived from wild cosmos species which are native to Mexico. Accordingly, with more warmth than is ordinarily available locally, they grew taller.

It is notable that cosmos is both the popular and the scientific name for this genus, and it is understandable that this name, alluding to the decorative value of the plant, comes from the Greek word kosmos, meaning an ornament. Truly this plant is highly ornamental. For gardeners who are not yet familiar with the cosmos, it looks like a daisy. It should look like a daisy because it is a type of daisy. All daisy-type flowers are related and they all belong to the huge composite plant family, Compositae.

Of all annual garden flowers, the cosmos is my favorite. Seemingly, its only fault is that it is so spectacular that it outstars everything else in the garden. The coloring of a red cosmos blossom is so intensely vivid that by contrast adjacent blossoms of other plants look muddy and washed out. Each cosmos blossom lasts for several days, and before one blossom fades it is replaced by two or more new blossoms on the same plant in a continuing process which lasts for several weeks until the plant is "bloomed out." Refrain from picking the first few blossoms for cut flower use; let them go to seed. These seeds will mature, drop to the ground and soon sprout, so that when the parent plant begins to turn brown, it can be pulled out and there already will be young self-seeded cosmos plants under it to serve as willing replacements. What more could a gardener ask?

Notable among the attributes of the cosmos is that its fernlike foliage is just as attractive as the blossoms. Both the foliage and the flowers are carried on slim but strong stems. A couple of stems with foliage and blossoms can be cut at a length appropriate to any slim vase and presto an attractive centerpiece will attract admiring attention from your luncheon guests.

Many cosmos varieties, or cultivars are available; these include a choice of single, double, crested, or frilled flowers. Available colors include white, yellow, orange, pink, red, and purple. I have not seen a truly blue cosmos, but have read that now such a color is available.

In the favorable climate of southern California, cultivation of the cosmos is almost without problems. The only essential requirement is full sunlight. A reasonable amount of moisture is necessary to sprout the seeds. Everything else seems to be optional. Poor soil, all the way from adobe to sand, is OK. After sprouting, the plant is quite drought resistant, disease resistant, snail resistant, and bug resistant. In comparison with other garden flowers, cosmos are exceptionally carefree.

You will find packets of cosmos seeds in several selections to choose from at your favorite nursery or garden store. Select that packet which has the type or color of blossom you prefer, or if you have no particular preference get a packet of mixed colors, sizes, and flower

OCTOBER 1984: JAIRO LOPEZ ADMIRES A COSMOS PLANT 7 FEET TALL IN FULL BLOOM IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY. THE SEED PACKET FROM WHICH THIS PLANT ORIGINATED INDICATED THAT THE PLANTS WOULD GROW "UP TO 3 FEET TALL." THE DISCREPANCY IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE UNUSUALLY WARM 1984 SUMMER TEMPERATURES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

forms. Ignore the printed instructions to "plant in early spring soon after the last frost"; in southern California cosmos seeds can be planted during any month of the year. On the seed packet will be information on how tall the plants will grow. You can disregard that information too, because cosmos grow taller in warm weather than in cool weather, and they grow taller in rich soil than in poor soil. But in all conditions, you will agree that cosmos serve beautifully to add vivid color to the garden, and to provide cut flower decoration for your dining table.

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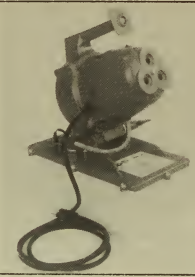

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DESERT HOLLY

Thomas Oberbauer

(Right)
WITH THE FIRST RAIN THAT WETS THE SANDY EARTH TO ONLY A FEW INCHES, NEW LEAVES APPEAR ALMOST WITH MAGICAL SUDDENESS AND THE OLD ONES WITHER AND FALL. THE WHOLE PLANT GLOWS WITH SPARKLING LIFE. EACH BABY LEAF AT FIRST IS ALMOST WHITE, TURNS SLOWLY TO MAUVE WITH A PETIOLE OF DELICATE SHELL PINK, THEN MATURES TO BLUE-GRAY, SILVERED ALL OVER WITH TINY SPANGLES.
Betty Mackintosh Photo

AS ONE WANDERS through the southern California desert, one may occasionally encounter a plant with silver-colored, holly-shaped leaves. Its coloration and leaf shape have earned it the common name of desert holly, but the scientific name is *Atriplex hymenelytra*.

If seen in the winter or spring, the leaves appear to be artificial due to their perfection. However, during the long hot Sonoran desert summer, the leaves are dull and parchment-like.

With the first rains of winter, the plant suddenly becomes covered with bright new leaves which seem to shine with silvery white. The plant is dioecious, meaning that there are both male and female plants. During late winter and early spring when desert holly flowers, the berrylike bud clusters become a burnt sienna. Later, the female plants may be covered with a crop of green flattened fruits.

The desert holly is a member of the Chenopodiaceae, referred to as the pigweed or saltbush family. The common garden beet is coincidentally a member of this cosmopolitan and diverse group. One feature that is possessed by nearly all of the members of this family is the scaly nature of the leaf surface. This scaly nature is responsible for the grey coloration on the majority of the members of this family and the silvery coloration of the desert holly.

The habitat of desert holly is soil with high concentrations of alkali salts. In some places it grows where actual gypsum crystals can be seen and few other plants survive. The desert holly ranges throughout the southwest deserts from Utah to Baja California, but because of its unique habitat, it is nowhere abundant. Desert holly can be grown in the garden, but it has particular requirements for good drainage, no summer watering, and no fertilizer.

For the occasional desert walker, stumbling across the desert holly can be a rewarding experience. Its striking coloration, berrylike flower buds and holly-shaped leaves make it an unforgetable acquaintance.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Sharon Siegan

Photos by Harvey Fischer

HOLIDAY PRESSURES WILL soon be upon us, and once the gift wrapping and culinary preparations are made, there seems to be little energy left to do more than hang a wreath and trim the tree. But floral arrangements are fun to make, quickly and easily accomplished with a judicious choice of long lasting material. The arrangements shown in this article have been assembled by accomplished arrangers using trimmings most families have, along with readily available greenery. So let us start in the garden—yours or a neighbor's.

Branches of pine or juniper are omnipresent. Cut three different lengths of Italian stone pine to provide a framework. Add a fat red candle (or even several thinner ones), some pine cones, and you have an instant arrangement for the entryway that will greet guests throughout the entire holiday season. If you want more glitter, use the same evergreen structure, but substitute a cluster of colored balls for the cones, and flock the pine. Spraying the cones and needle tips with silver or gold gives still another festive look.

As the orientals know, chrysanthemums team beautifully with pine. Use them in white for a dramatic New Year's celebration. Or you might usher in Thanksgiving with brilliant yellow or tawny mums, a perfect accompaniment to the autumn harvest on your dining table. Home grown camellias are equally effective, if you keep in mind their short life as cut flowers.

Fresh fruit is always a nice touch in a holiday arrangement. The heavy fruit of ponegranate was fastened with nylon filament to a branch so that it could be placed in proper balance with the loquat branches. Small apples or tangerines are equally adaptable and could be similarly secured.

In his oriental style arrangement, Glenn Haugh built his vertical line with iris leaves, adding the delicate golden tracery of pomegranate leaves. Raphiolepis sprigs and berries added weight, and the single pomegranate set at the base of the container balanced the composition while harmonizing with the subtle color scheme and restrained appearance. For a more colorful look, substitute bright berry (cotoneaster or holly) clusters for the fruit and raphiolepis, and set it against upright sansevieria leaves.

'NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION'—BY GLENN HAUGH

Dorothy Stewart has collected a wide assortment of folk dolls from Mexico. Her arrangement in which she shows off her collection would be perfect on a chest, entryway table or just creating a colorful corner. She circled a large crassula with Indian dolls, all packed into a Mexican tin container stuffed with leptospermum. For added color and vibrancy she draped a handwoven Greek cloth behind the arrangement. Dorothy also suggested packing a Mexican basket (lid upright) with twisted juniper and grouping the dolls in the evergreens.

(Upper) 'THE FESTIVE LOQUAT'—BY GLENN HAUGH
(Lower) 'HAPPY HOLIDAYS'—BY GLENN HAUGH

'FELIZ NAVIDAD'—BY DOROTHY STEWART

Although few of us have doll collections, we do have bright fabrics, shawls etc., that could be draped with arrangements featuring collections that normally deck the tree. Animals, or even ornaments grouped as little treasures inside an interesting greenery filled container could be used. Color and texture are the important considerations in your selection of greenery.

France Conoley chose a caroling scene for her theme, and added a ceramic container with manzanita and white pine branches to unite the arrangement. Other holiday figurines, Santas, snowmen, or creches, might be enriched by an arrangement of greenery or even one with flowers that complements your statuary.

'THE CAROLERS'—BY FRANCE CONOLEY

'HOLIDAY DRAMA'—BY SHARON SIEGAN

'HOLIDAY LEFTOVERS'—BY SHARON SIEGAN

Iris leaves and aspidistra are known for their longevity, and Sharon Siegan casually arranged them in a clear pedestal bowl. For color and drama she added flame colored cannas. Glads or another spike flower could have been used with equal effect and longer life.

Leftovers constituted the basis for a little arrangement placed on a black, covered board. The vertical line consisted of pomegranate greenery, with hibiscus flowers nestling against loquat leaves. Hibiscus are fragile, but do not require water for short term decor. Although the particular color harmony of this arrangement, golden pomegranate to richly veined red hibiscus was outstanding, any large flower could easily be substituted. A similar arrangement featuring gourds, fruits, or vegetables would also be effective.

With these suggestions a little imagination and ingenuity can make the holidays more festive.

DEEP IRRIGATION FOR TREES

Deep fall irrigation for trees has proven beneficial. It has shown that trees will do better the following season if they go through the winter season with adequate moisture. Be sure to irrigate well beyond the outer dripline. Water does not spread much laterally in the soil so it is necessary to apply it over all of the root system. Run water, preferably with a sprinkler, in a large basin for three to four hours for light sandy soil; six hours for average soil; and about eight hours for heavy soil. Encourage deep rooting of trees by soaking the soil to a depth of three feet or more. Many trees such as elm, acacia, eucalyptus, and aleppo pine make fast top growth from roots matted in moist surface soil where they not only compete with other plants, but become top heavy and unreliable. They are likely to blow over in a heavy wind.

A.M.

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HORTICULTURE CALENDAR

(Continued from Page 166)

Dec 7, 8, 9
San Diego Floral Event

SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SHOW "A CHRISTMAS FANTASY"
Casa del Prado, Majorca Room, Balboa Park
San Diego, Calif. Free
Fri: 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. (Members Only)
Fri: 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Sat: Noon to 9:00 p.m. Sun: Noon to 4:00 p.m.

Dec 7, 8

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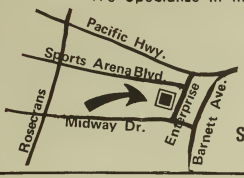

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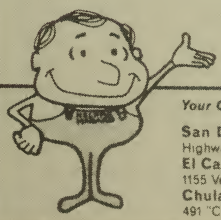

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A WINDCHIME GARDEN

by June W. Rodgers

AFTER WE HAD raised four children and as many pets, we turned to raising flowers. When the ping pong table, croquet mallets, pet feeding bowls and beds were removed, we were able to reevaluate our east and west patios, and fulfill our hopes for two lathed gardens.

It was to be a do-it-ourselves-together project. We came up with a simple plan of joining the structures to the house and then had the idea that all the gardening would be at waist height—no stooping.

The first windchime garden emerged with 42 square feet of planting area in raised beds, 6 feet of bench plants, and a round table covered with pots of sun-loving plants. Hanging pots from the house fascia gave us another level of planting. Our program was as follows:

Books were studied for ideas and we put many of these ideas together to create an original garden.

The area on the northeast side of the house was cleared of ice plant.

The structure was planned to create a new dimension for the bedroom—a beautiful bower or alcove seen through a wood-framed sliding glass door.

All the lumber used was redwood 4X4-inch posts, 2X4-inch frame, 1-inch lath, 6-inch grapestakes, and 2X12-inch boards for the 2 foot high raised beds.

The 2X4-inch rafters were joined at the house fascia with joist anchors.

Bricks were laid adjacent to the existing patio.

The structure was built over the Labor Day weekend. A bed of gravel was laid in the bottom of the planters and soil was added to within a foot of the top. For the bedding soil, we mixed together 3 bags (2 cubic feet each) of azalea organic planter mix, 2 cubic feet of grade #2 sponge rock, 2 bags (2/3 cubic feet each) of plaster sand, and 1 pound of fertilizer. This has proven to be the perfect combination.

Our first garden is on the northeast side of the house. This area takes shade-loving tuberous and fibrous begonias, fuchsias, camellias, cinerarias, impatiens, and kalanchoes. The impatiens were spectacular. Each grew 2 feet tall and quite as much across. In fact, they were so luxuriant that people seeing them for the first time did not recognize them as old friends. Nasturtiums volunteered and covered the north side completely in the spring and are reappearing this fall. A grapevine brought in the beak of a bird has been an interesting and productive feature.

With windchimes, bird feeders, and a small waterwheel, our patio is a symphony of tinkling bells, whirring wings, and lapping water. This colorful private garden is better than a painting as it changes with the seasons.

The second windchime garden, which we built off the living room to the west, gives us another private outdoor dining area, accessible from the dining room through French doors. Though the larger garden is fenced, we used cedar grapestakes at the edge of the concrete patio to create a cozy privacy. A shelf is attached to them for plants in pots. This area facing south and west needs petunias, lobelia, ivy, and creeping charlie for sun. [Ed: This garden is located near the coast.]

The building procedure was simple, and the cost approximated that of a patio umbrella.

We drew plans to take in part of the existing patio seen from the living room picture window as a large shadow box.

Two 4X4-inch posts were attached to the concrete floor with post anchors, using a masonry drill.

Wedges were cut in the 2X4-inch rafters at the eaves (rain gutters precluded using metal joists).

The rafters were covered with 6-inch laths laid 1 inch apart.

Two-inch grapestakes 5 feet high were set one stake apart.

A 16-inch wide shelf was built of 2X2-inch lumber spaced 1 inch apart for drainage.

Again, everything is at waist height or in baskets nailed to both sides of the 4X4-inch posts or hanging from the eaves. The living room, dining room, and kitchen have taken on new dimensions with the creation of this richly planted garden. Petunias, lobelias, euphorbias, vincas, and impatiens, mostly in pinks and blue and white, thrive in pots and redwood planters on the shelf and posts. A massing of coleus, white impatiens, and acanthus makes a northfacing area lush with color. We filled a corner just outside the French doors with a two-tiered pedestal made from leftover laths. Fibrous begonias are thriving there.

Hanging bird feeding stations for hummingbirds, sparrows, finches, blue jays, orioles, and doves make this our favorite spot for dining and bird watching. A mighty Monterey cypress tree in the neighbor's garden gives our new lath garden a woodsy atmosphere. A light breeze rings a bell windchime to geometric games with the overhead laths.

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50 YEARS AGO...

Carol Greentree

THIS INFORMATION IS AS APPLICABLE TODAY AS IT WAS 50 YEARS AGO. ONLY THE WRITING STYLE HAS CHANGED.

"Autumn Colorings" by K. O. Sessions, November, 1933.

The Virginia creeper, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia (Amelopsis quinquefolia)*, was seen in fine color over the north wall at Mr. Marston's garden last week, and proves its value when properly placed. [Ed: George W. Marston donated Presidio Park to the City of San Diego in 1929.] An uncommon but interesting shrub is the Pistachio nut, which takes on the most vivid shades of red and some yellows. It does not flourish in cold climates. Its nut gives the green coloring for nuts and candies. The Lombardy poplar is our only bright yellow fall tree; even it needs some cold to make its colors brilliant and keen. The fruiting persimmon has choice autumn colorings and is very attractive with the ripening fruit. The sweetgum or Liquidambar of the southern states takes on a good autumn coloring and will fit some locations in San Diego with good results. Bougainvillea, Bignonia, *Pyrostegia venusta (Bignonia venusta)*, Poinsettias, Cassias and Nandinas are full of colorings in November and December and give a brightness to our abundant green shrubbery.

"Plant Collecting" by Lester Rowntree, December, 1933.

A plant's native heath, these days, has a way of disappearing from beneath it...without warning. If you have no local wildlife refuge (all too few of us have), turn a corner of your own grounds into a sub-refuge, with [native plants]. In planning its permanent home, remember that most of our native plants have [deep] tap roots. It is best to plant only very young plants and dig deep holes for them. After a period of protection and acclimatization in your yard, you can put a container plant into a permanent home if this is within reach of your hose. A young transplanted plant has to be helped through the first summer after its move. One summer's watering is usually enough to set it on its feet. If the winter rains have thoroughly soaked the ground and if you can provide water during the dry times between rains, put the plant into place.

After that your biggest responsibilities are to see to it that it is protected from overcrowding by its neighbors and that it has an occasional pruning. If it is the right plant for the right place, and if your work has been well done, you will crow with delight.

Ed: Lester Rowntree, the Kate Sessions of native plants, wrote several books about them. One, "Hardy Californians," originally published in 1936, has recently been reprinted by Peregrine Smith, Inc.

Ed: All botanical names have been updated (Hortus Third), with the original in parenthesis.

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Book Reviews

Review by SHARON SIEGAN

All these books are in the horticulture library, San Diego Floral Association.

Bulbs and Perennials, Julie Grace, general editor. Timber Press, P.O. Box 1631, Beaverton, Oregon 97075, 1984. $24.95.

Lavishly illustrated with 643 color plates, this is part of a "Know your garden series" written to tempt the gardener. The bulbs and perennials shown are vibrantly attractive, making resistance difficult. Fortunately there is enough cultural information so that intelligent selection can be made. Many of the plants described are native to New Zealand, Australia and South Africa and this gives the clue as to how well they will perform in your own miniclimate.

The Book of Cacti and Other Succulents, Claude Chidamian, Timber Press, P.O. Box 1631, Beaverton, OR 97075, reprinted 1984. Paperback, $13.95.

Cacti and succulents are described, family by family, with detailed information on appearance, historical and geographical development, garden use and cultural needs. Specific recommendations are given within each group.

The book provides a wealth of information on various succulent species. Its primary purpose is to provide sound advice on cultural practices.

The Garden Book, John Brookes, Crown Publishers, Inc.; New York, New York, 1984. $22.50.

British landscape and garden designer John Brookes, offers a step-by-step approach to planning, designing, constructing, and planting - of your personal garden. Emphasizing the harmonious relationship between garden and home, he presents many different specialized garden solutions for inspiration.

The do-it-yourselfer or gardener who is closely working with a professional to (re)create a garden, will find this invaluable. There are specific suggestions on design, choice of materials, elevations, etc. In addition to establishing a physical plan, Brookes also includes an extensive list of plantings with sufficient information to allow intelligent choice.

Trees and Shrubs, Julie Grace, general editor. Timber Press, P.O. Box 1631, Beaverton, Oregon 97075, 1983. $24.95.

A companion book to the above named, this compendium of basic plantings is another magnificent volume. Its lush, full color photos, primarily of fruiting and flowering closeups are like browsing through a beautiful garden. For those who desire more information on the overall appearance of the tree or shrub, descriptions are excellent and also provide useful information on each plant's natural habitat and cultural needs.

Growing Plants Without Soil, Hans-August Rotter, Distributed by Sterling Pub. Co., 2 Park Ave., NY, NY 10016, 1983. $15.95.

The concept of soilless agriculture is certainly provocative - no messy dirt to spill or hold insect pests or weigh down pots. Place your pots in water and let nature take over. That is the principle; unfortunately it remains necessary to provide the plant with a foundation for its roots (clay granules recommended), nutrition (fertilizer), proper light and temperature, and most importantly, the right size container. Having invested in the above, the author indicates there are still many plants too delicate or demanding to be recommended for hydroculture.

For those who remain intrigued, this book provides all of the necessary information, including several conversion tables to facilitate translation of meters, litres, etc. into English measurements. The color photos of the healthy, lush, thriving "green dividers" attest to the success of this method.

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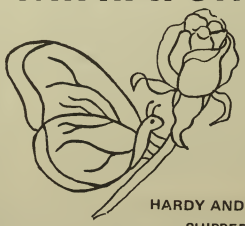

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NOW IS THE TIME

compiled by PENNY BUNKER

A CULTURAL CALENDAR OF CARE FROM OUR AFFILIATES

BEGONIAS Margaret Lee

Now is the time

- to be extra vigilant - control the insect problem, spray for mealybugs and other pests.
- to spray also for mildew control - read labels and follow the complete instructions of manufacturers.
- to watch weather conditions; if dry, keep planting material moist, but **not** wet.
- to feed lightly a couple of times a month to aid plants in withstanding adverse conditions a bit better.
- to keep plants clean. Top dress with your favorite mulch.
- to protect potted plants if heavy rains; a heavy run off can wash out soil and expose the roots.
- to allow tuberous begonias to go dormant.

BONSAI Dr. Herbert Markowitz

Now is the time

- to protect deciduous trees that are dormant; locate them where there will be no sudden temperature changes, excessive sun, or wind.
- to check watering schedule. Cut down on water if a normal season. Watch dormant trees; they need enough water to keep them moist but **not** wet.
- to prune black pines by cutting the candles about half length.
- to withhold fertilizer.
- to stop transplanting trees at this time.
- to remove old leaves, fruit, or seeds from deciduous trees.

BROMELIADS Linda Prell

Now is the time

- to reduce watering during cold damp weather.
- to withhold fertilizer so plants may harden off.
- to leave offshoots on the mother plant; they survive winter better this way.
- to bait for snails and slugs that thrive during the rainy season.
- to protect plants from exposure to the elements; frost, hail, and strong winds can do irreparable damage.

CACTI & SUCCULENTS Verna Pasek

Now is the time

- to watch watering. Many plants are resting at this time; too much water will cause root damage. Water only those plants that need it.
- to give a low-nitrogen feeding.
- to make cuttings of succulents. Use the best ones for a living wreath for Christmas.
- to check for insects and such pests as scale and mealybugs.
- to remember to shelter tender cacti and succulents in case of heavy rains or cooler weather.
- to repot root-bound plants.
- to collect material for dish gardens for the holidays—a layer of gravel with some horticultural charcoal helps sweeten the potting soil.

CAMELLIAS San Diego Camellia Society

Now is the time

- to feed a 2-10-10 fertilizer for better and larger blooms.
- to keep plants clean; remove all fallen blooms and petals to prevent possible petal blight infestation.
- to continue disbudding.
- to treat some buds with gibberellic acid once a week for larger blooms. (Essential if you intend to enter a show in the spring.)
- to maintain high humidity. Do not allow plants to dry out; mist late afternoons on dry hot days to keep from burning leaves.
- to maintain a regular spray program, especially against looper worms.
- to renew mulch where necessary, using either bark or pine needles.
- to select new plants while in bloom.

DAHLIAS Abe Janzen

Now is the time

- to cut old stalks that have died back, to about 12 inches from the ground.
- to withhold water from tubers left in the ground to harden off.
- to lift clumps (before the rains start) and allow to dry for a few hours before placing in storage.
- to leave one eye on each division if dividing tubers before storage. Apply soil sulphur to cuts, and store in vermiculite or other medium in a protected place.
- to be sure to tag tuber as you place it in storage.

EPIPHYLLUMS Frank Granatowski

Now is the time

- to withhold fertilizers, especially those containing nitrogen, allowing the plant to become semi-dormant.
- to protect plants from exposure to the elements. Frost, hail, and strong winds can cause irreparable damage. Over exposure to harsh winter sunlight can be as detrimental as exposure to hot summer sun.
- to transplant into larger containers plants that are not expected to bloom next spring.
- to check the apple (seed pod). Ripened apples may be picked, but do not rush this procedure. Germination of the seeds will be vastly improved when they are fully matured.
- to take advantage of the winter rains. Prolonged rains will not harm plants in a good porous soil; they tend to leach the soil of accumulated salts. Be sure to collect rain water for future use. Store in covered opaque containers to prevent mosquito larvae and the buildup of algae.
- to maintain good grooming of plants. Prune out dead, unsightly, and non productive branches to conserve the plant's energy.
- to keep containers free of debris. Bait for slugs and snails. A few granules of Slugetta placed at the base of the container have proved to give effective control and leave little or no residue.

FERNS Ray Sodomka

Now is the time

- to check containers to ensure planting mix has not completely broken down.
- to clean out weeds, oxalis, and debris from pots.
- to be alert for insects. Slugs and snails are ever active.
- to water if it does not rain. Check for any plants not reached by rain.
- to apply a weak fertilizer solution once more before the December rest period.
- to be vigilant for dry hot winds. Do not allow plants to dry out, keep them moist.
- to plant spore; keep in a warm area.

FUCHSIAS William Selby

Now is the time

- to allow plants to rest; reduce or stop fertilizing.
- to do heavy pruning in mild areas or in greenhouses. Can make cuttings if good tips available. Might experiment with hard wood cuttings.
- to clean up. Remove all dead leaves, blossoms, and debris from pots, baskets, and plants in the ground.
- to watch for insects, molds, and fungus in the warmer areas.
- to mulch well those plants left outside in areas where there is danger of frost; move baskets under cover for protection.

GERANIUMS Carol Roller

Now is the time

- to water only when plants are somewhat dry. Each watering should moisten the entire soil ball and excess water should drain away.
- to continue feeding a balanced fertilizer dissolved in water, using at half the recommended strength as often as needed to keep the plants growing well.
- to prune plants which have not been cut back. At least one green leaf should remain on every stem which is being cut back. Lanky plants which were pruned earlier in the fall can be cut back again to produce more compact plants.
- to tip-pinch plants which were pruned early in the fall.
- to make cuttings from prunings. Shelter the cuttings from extreme weather conditions.
- to continue pest and disease control using products according to the manufacturer's directions.
- to give plants temporary shelter if temperatures fall below 30° F.
- to continue to rotate plants on a regular basis in order to produce well-shaped plants.

GESNERIADS Mike Ludwig

Now is the time

- to watch for late dry hot winds and keep plants watered.
- to prepare all plants for winter dormancy. Those with rhizomes and tubers can be uprooted and stored in small baggies.
- to place columneas, nematanthus, and streptocarpus outdoors in a partially sheltered area; protect especially from frost. Keep new growth arrested to prevent frost damage.
- to order next year's plants and supplies to get the best plants as they are sent on a first come, first served basis.

IRISES San Diego-Imperial Counties Iris Society

Now is the time

- to clean beds of dead leaves and weeds; aphids winter-over in debris-filled areas.
- to spray for aphids or give a light feeding of a systemic to control all sucking plant pests.

to make a final planting of bearded type, spurias, Louisianas, and Siberians.
to plant bulbs of Dutch, English, and Spanish for spring blooms.
to feed tall-bearded a balanced organic fertilizer. Give Japanese and Louisiana irises an acid type (camellia food is convenient).
to water spurias regularly until well established.
to set up a good watering program. Give Louisianas and Japanese a wet swamplike condition. Spurias and beardless like it damp, but not swampy. Bearded irises need alternate soaking and drying to force root growth.
to move and replant Pacific Coast natives in late December. Be sure the little white roots are showing before removing. Water well until they are established.

ORCHIDS Charlie Fouquette

Now is the time

to let deciduous dendrobiums go dormant, stop feeding any nitrogen when plants have lost their leaves. Water just enough to keep plant from drying out.
to watch for spikes on some evergreen dendrobiums when the terminal leaves are mature.
to repot cattleyas if they are out-growing their pots.
to remember **not** to rotate plants when cleaning around greenhouse.
to feed cattleyas 18-18-18 fertilizer every third watering.
to feed cymbidiums as 10-30-20 or equal fertilizer.
to stake new spikes carefully; do not rotate pots.
to remember not to soak back-bulbs that were planted last spring or summer. Do not wet the inside new growth.
to repot phals when potting medium has broken down. Keep them damp but **not** wet.
to feed phals with 18-18-18 fertilizer. New spikes should be starting to form when temperature drops below 55° F. Spikes take about 90 days.
to remember not to rotate pots; keep spikes growing towards the light source.
to repot doritaenopsis and doritis if days are warm after they have finished blooming.
to keep roots of variegata oncidiums slightly damp; their spikes will start when the days get a little longer.
to feed diluted solution of a 30-10-10 fertilizer to plain and complex oncidium alliance, brassidiums, miltonias if planted in bark; otherwise use a 18-18-18 formula.
to clean up leaves and trash in greenhouse. Take down shade cloth to give as much light as possible to plants.
to set out snail granules for the pests.
to clean swamp coolers, check electric cords. A good time to check all equipment such as motors, heaters, etc.
to clean spray nozzles if they have scale deposits; place them in 20% phosphoric acid until clean or place in vinegar until clear.

ROSES Richard Streeper

Now is the time

to withhold water to induce dormancy.
to avoid fertilization.
to prepare new rose beds for January planting.
to remove plants which will be replaced at bareroot planting time.
to order roses if you plan to buy from mail-order suppliers.
to harvest rose seeds and plant them in a peat and sand mixture in pots to create new rose varieties.
to begin mid-winter pruning of floribundas (mid-December).

VEGETABLES Rosalie Garcia

Now is the time

to plant, for a second planting if not planted already, plants of broccoli, celery, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, lettuce, and spinach.
to remember that seeds of any kind will germinate slowly and poorly during cold, short days, and might be lost by decay if the soil becomes too wet by rain.
to plan to plant roots of artichokes, rhubarb, and asparagus and bareroot plants of cane varieties, strawberries, grapes, and deciduous fruit trees after the holidays. Prepare the soil for these as early as possible by mixing in organic matter. Organic matter should be in small pieces so it will mix well with the soil and decay faster. If the soil is adobe or clay, use some gypsum.

GREEN THUMB Penny Bunker

Now is the time

to prepare and enrich your soil, preparing now for the bareroot planting of roses, trees, etc. in late December and January.
to feed birds-of-paradise. Cut out dead growth from clumps to improve appearance.
to plant bulbs for spring color: daffodils, ranunculus, anemones, scillas, Dutch irises, lilies. Tulips and hyacinths may be planted after Thanksgiving.

Be sure to refrigerate 4-6 weeks before planting.

to set out winter/spring annuals for continued garden color.

to cut chrysanthemum plants after blooming to 6 to 8 inches from the ground. Feed to encourage new growth for next year's additional plants.

to secure plants and young trees to prevent damage from wintry winds.

to shape and prune holly and pyracantha when cutting berries for Christmas decorations.

to use snail and slug bait regularly.

to apply dormant oil sprays in December.

Holiday Greetings

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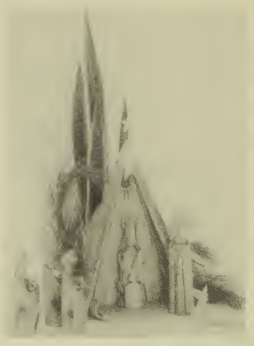
San Diego, CA 92101

A Christmas Fantasy



(Left) A HANDMADE CRECHE FROM TAIWAN DECORATED WITH GREENERY.

(Above) ONE OF THE ROOM VIGNETTES TO BE DECORATED BY THE SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION ARRANGERS. Furniture by *LLOYD'S* of San Diego.

(Left) RENE VAN REMS, FLORAL DESIGNER, WORKING ON HIS DESIGN FOR THE SPECTACULAR DECORATIONS FOR THE 12-FOOT CHRISTMAS TREE.

(See Back Cover)

YEAR 1984 SUBJECT INDEX

ANNUALS
Garcia, Rosalie
The Versatile Sunflower, 75:5:141-2
Gunther, Bill
The Cosmos, 75:6:177-8
A Plant for Children, 75:1:14
Know Your Seedlings, 75:2:55
ARRANGEMENTS
Conoley, France
Holiday Arrangement, 75:6:182
Green, Adrienne
Clivia Arrangement, 75:1:10
Haugh, Glenn
Holiday Arrangements, 75:6:180-1
Jones, Barbara S.
Fall Arrangement, 75:5:142
Siegan, Sharon
Holiday Arrangements, 75:6:182
Stewart, Dorothy
Holiday Arrangement, 75:6:181
BIOGRAPHICAL
Macdonald, Allethe
Memorial—George James, 75:3:74
Memorial—Rosalie Garcia, 75:6:170
Gunther, Bill
Meet Dr. Geoffrey Levin, 75:5:145
BOOK REVIEWS
Botschantzeva, Z. P.
Tulips—Taxonomy, Morphology, Cytology, Phytogeograph, and Physiology, 75:1:26
Brookes, John
The Garden Book, 75:6:189
Cameron, Elizabeth
A Floral ABC, 75:1:26
Chidamian, Claude
The Book of Cacti and Other Succulents, 75:6:189
Cowles, Fleur
The Flower Game, 75:2:59
Cribb, Dr. Phillip & Leedal, G. Philip
The Mountain Flowers of Southern Tanzania, 75:2:59
Damrosch, Barbara
Theme Gardens, 75:5:160
Dyer, R. Allen
Ceropegia, Brachystelma and Riocreuxia in South Africa, 75:5:159
Grace, Julie, general editor
Bulbs and Perennials, 75:6:189
Grant, John A. & Carol L.
Garden Design Illustrated, 75:5:160
Goulding, Jeanne, H.
Fanny Osborne's Flower Paintings, 75:5:159
Hatfield, Audrey Wayne
The Weed Herbal, 75:5:159
Hume, Ed
The Ed Hume Garden Book, 75:2:59
James, Wilma
Gardening With Biblical Plants, 75:2:59
Johnson, Marion W.
Small and Beautiful Flower Arrangements, 75:3:90
Murphy, Richard C. & Meyer, William E.
The Care and Feeding of Trees, 75:3:90
Newton, Betty
Gardening Beautifully in Southern California, 75:3:90
Nightingale, Gay
Growing Cyclamen, 75:1:26
Okun, Sheila
A Book of Cut Flowers, 75:1:26
Pereire, Anita & Van Zuylen
Gardens of France, 75:5:159
Proudley, Brian & Valerie
How to Grow Fuchsias, 75:5:159
Ray, Mary Helen & Nicholls, Robert P.
A Guide to Significant Historic Gardens of America, 75:2:59
Rose, Graham
The Low Maintenance Garden, 75:5:160
Rotter, Hans-August
Growing Plants Without Water, 75:6:189
Rubio, Nicolau M.
Habitat: Landscape Gardening, 75:2:59
Steffek, Edwin F.
(The new) Wild Flowers and How to Grow Them, 75:3:90
The Pruning Manual, 75:1:26
Segerback, K. B.
Orchids of Nigeria, 75:5:160
BOTANICAL
Chamlee (Witham), Helen
A Primer For Bark Watchers, 75:4:121-2 (Repr. 61:2:14)
Carruth, Tom
Hybrid Tea High Hopes, 75:3:87-8
Greentree, Carol
Trickly Little Trichomes, 75:1:11-3
Whitaker, Thomas W. & Provvidenti, R.
An Expedition to Collect Lettuce, Part III, 75:1:22-3
BULB & BULBLIKE
Hottes, Alfred C.
You Would Like Tigerflowers, 75:4:115 (Repr. 45:1:8)
CALIFORNIA GARDEN MAGAZINE
Macdonald, Allethe
Editorial, 75:4:101
Robinson, Alfred D.
Foreword, 75:4:103 (Repr. 1:1:1)
CONSERVATION
Graves, Walter L.
Grow Your Own Nitrogen, 75:5:157-8
Oberbauer, Thomas A.
Rare Plants and Their Value, 75:5:137-9
CONTAINER GARDENING
Cope, Skipper
Glamorous Baskets, 75:2:41
Landon, Raymond E.
Paphiopedilums, 75:2:47-9
Ludwig, Mike & Macdonald, Allethe
Basic Culture of Indoor Plants, 75:6:175-6
Macdonald, Allethe
Popular Indoor Plants, 75:6:171-4
Thaisz, Dewey deButts
After Dinner Gardening, 75:3:85-6
Wellingham-Jones, Patricia
Ivy Doesn't Have to Mean Algerian, 75:2:39-40
DAHLIAS
Lohman, W. B.
Primer For Growing Dazzling Dahlias, 75:2:45-6
FRUITS & NUTS
Tittle, Bess M.
Gleaning the Alleys, 75:2:53-4
GARDENING, DROUGHT-RESISTANT
Macdonald, Allethe
Lively Limitless Lantanas, 75:1:24
Sessions, K. O.
Drought Resistants, 75:3:89(Repr. 25:3:6)
GARDENING, SEASONAL
Now Is The Time, Compiled by Penny Bunker, 75:1:27-30; 75:2:60-2; 75:3:91-4, 75:5:161-3; 75:6:190-3
GARDENING, TECHNIQUES & MAINTENANCE
Davis, Robert W.
One Gardener's Experience With Sheet Composting, 75:5:140
Graves, Walter L.
Grow Your Own Nitrogen, 75:5:157-8
Rodgers, June W.
A Windchime Garden, 75:6:185
GARDENS, PRIVATE
Curtis, Juana
Meet Some Old Friends, 75:5:147
Garcia, Rosalie
My Neighbor's Garden, 75:3:83-4
Rodgers, June W.
A Windchime Garden, 75:6:185
GERANIUMS
Clark, Alice M.
Pelargonium Parade, 75:4:114 (Repr. 38:1:6 & 61:3:5)
GROUND COVERS
Hoyt, Roland S.
Of The Earth—A Part, 75:4:113 (Repr.40:3:1)
Wellingham-Jones, Patricia
Ivy Doesn't Have to Mean Algerian, 75:2:39-40
HERBS
Gray, Josephine
Harvest and Renewal, 75:5:146 (Repr. 61:5:21)
Know Your Seedlings, 75:2:56
HISTORICAL
Greentree, Carol
50 Years Ago, 75:2:42; 75:3:89; 75:5:148; 75:6:187
Blake, Dean
September Weather in San Diego County, 75:4:108 (Repr. 24:3:6)
Macdonald, Allethe
San Diego's Distinctive Herbarium, 75:5:143-4
Robinson's Thoughts, 75:4:128-30 (Repr. 1 - 21)
Siegan, Sharon
Heraldic Roses, 75:3:73-4
ILLUSTRATIONS (ORIGINAL ART)
Bannatyne, Stephanie
Ivy 'Marbled Dragon', 75:2:39
Ivy 'Triton', 75:2:40
Fassett, Bob
Ada Perry Cartoon, 75:4:111
Frey, Frances
Deciduous Magnolia, 75:2:37
Gladson, Carol
Graphics, 75:2:41
Greentree, Carol
Trichomes, 75:1:11-2
Gronborg, Irina
Radish, 75:1:Front Cover
Hottes, Alfred C.
Solanum wendlantii, 75:5:147
Tigerflower, 75:4:115
Maley, Pat
Paphiopedilum philippinense, 75:2:47
Rose 'Olympiad', 75:3:Front Cover
Sunflower, 75:5:Front Cover
Torch Ginger, 75:2:Front Cover
Mastro, Marj
75th Anniversary, 75:4:Front Cover
Grapevine in Container, 75:3:85
Scheer, Ilse
America's first lighted Christmas tree, 75:6:Front Cover
Valentien, A. R.
Matilija poppies, 75:4:103 (Repr. 1:1:5)
Matilifa poppy cover, 75:4:Back Cover (Repr. 1:2:Front Cover)
ILLUSTRATIONS (PHOTOGRAPHS)
Bode, Fred A.
Pelargonium 'Caprice', 75:4:114
Faulkner, David K.
Larva of a mealybug destroyer; Larva of convergent ladybird beetle, 75:3:75-6
Fischer, Harvey
Holiday arrangements, 75:6:180-2
Gunther, Bill
Agaves, 75:1:6-10
Dr. Geoffrey Levin, 75:5:145
Palm Canyon viewing bridge, 75:5:149
Plants in an alley, 75:2:53
Swan plant, 75:1:14
Jones, Barbara S.
Fall arrangement, 75:5:142
Mackintosh, Betty
Pointers on Photographing Flowers, 75:4:117-9 (Repr. 59:5:14)
Matilija poppies, rose of montana, blue-eyed grass, 75:4:117-8
Ponderosa pine tree trunks, 75:4:121 (Repr. 61:2:14)
Desert Holly, 75:6:179 (Repr. 55:6:Front C.
Flame Violet, 75:6:171
Oberbauer, Thomas A.
Cleveland's gold stars, Otay Mesa mint, variegated dudley, 75:5:137-9
O'Neil, Jack
Rose 'Pristine' and 'Century Two',75:3:69-70
Streeper, Dick
Rose 'Peace' in landscape, 75:3:79
LANDSCAPING
Macdonald, Allethe
Lively Limitless Lantanas, 75:1:24-5
Perry, Ada
What Do You Plant in the Shade, 75:4:111-2 (Repr. 38:1:6)
Rowntree, Lester
Two Useful Manzanitas, 75:4:108(Repr.23:10:5)
Siegan, Sharon
Is There a Cotoneaster in Your Landscape?, 75:1:18-9
Streeper, Dick
Hybrid Teas in the Landscape, 75:3:79-81
Wellingham-Jones, Patricia
Ivy Doesn't Have to Mean Algerian, 75:2:39-40
NATIVE PLANTS
Dunn, Dorothy
Agaves, 75:1:5-7
Macdonald, Allethe
San Diego's Distinctive Herbarium, 75:5:143-4
Oberbauer, Thomas A.
Rare Plants and Their Value, 75:5:137-9
Desert Holly, 75:6:179
Sessions, K. O.
Romneya Coulteri, or Matilija Poppy, 75:4:103 (Repr. 1:1:5)
Rowntree, Lester
Two Useful Manzanitas, 75:4:108 (Repr. 23:10:5)

PARKS, BALBOA
Gunther, Bill
Explore a Tropical Palm Canyon, 75:5:149-151
Meet Dr. Geoffrey Levin, 75:5:145
Macdonald, Allethe
San Diego's Distinctive Herbarium, 75:5:143-4
PARKS, TORREY PINES
Fleming, Guy L.
Re-Discovering Torrey Pines, 75:4:106-7 (Repr. 8:1:8-9)
ORCHIDS
Landon, Raymond E.
Paphiopedilums, 75:2:47-9
PALMS
Gunther, Bill
Explore a Tropical Palm Canyon, 75:5:149-151
PERENNIALS
Jones, Barbara S.
Alstroemeria, 75:3:71-2
Watson, Donald P.
Ornamental Gingers, 75:2:43-4
ROSES
Cairns, Thomas
The Hybrid Tea, 75:3:69-70
Carruth, Tom
Hybrid Tea High Hopes, 75:3:87-8
Siegan, Sharon
Heraldic Roses, 75:3:73-4
Streeper, Dick
Hybrid Teas in the Landscape, 75:3:79-81
PESTS, DISEASES, PREDATORS
Faulkner, David K.
The Ladybird Beetles, 75:3:75-8
Macdonald, Stuart
All About Fire Blight, 75:1:20-1
SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION
Greentree, Carol
50 Years Ago, 75:2:42 (Repr. 25:11:6)
Macdonald, Allethe
Editorial, 75:4:101
Chrysanthemum Tea, 75:4:119 (Repr. 23:5:5)
Fleming, Guy L.
Re—Discovering Torrey Pines, 75:4:106-7 (Repr. 8:1:8-9)
Foreword, Editorials, 75:4:102 (Repr. 1:1:1; 2:1:3; 3:1:3)
Robinson's Thoughts, 75:4:128-230(Repr.2-21)
SHADE PLANTS
Perry, Ada
What Do You Plant in the Shade, 75:4:111-2 (Repr. 38:1:6)
SHRUBS
Evans, Hugh
Dwarf Flowering Eucalypti and Rare Grevilleas, 75:4:109 (Repr. 25:7:4)
Macdonald, Allethe
Lively Limitless Lantanas, 75:1:24
Rountree, Lester
Two Useful Manzanitas, 75:4:108 (Repr.23:10:5)
Siegan, Sharon
Is There a Cotoneaster in Your Landscape, 75:1:18-9
Short, Harvey F.
Azaleas, 75:4:116 (Repr. 57:1:10)
SUCCULENTS
Dunn, Dorothy
Agaves, 75:1:5-7
Phelps, Leroy N.
Some Miniature Agaves and Their Culture, 75:1:8-10
TREES, FLOWERING
Chew, Ernest B.
Deciduous Magnolias, 75:2:37-8
Evans, Hugh
Dwarf Flowering Eucalypti and Rare Grevilleas, 75:4:109 (Repr. 25:7:4)
TREES, FRUIT
James, George
Avocado Trees, 75:4:104-5 (Repr. 69:3:86)
Popeno, F. W.
Avocados For Home Gardens, 75:4:103 (Repr. 3:11:4)
TREES, ORNAMENTAL
Chamlee (Witham), Helen
A Primer For Bark Watchers, 75:4:121-2 (Repr. 61:2:14)
Garcia, Rosalie
Deck the Hall With Holly, 75:6:169-70
VEGETABLES
Garcia, Rosalie
Cabbages, 75:5:152-4
Eggplant, the Beautiful, 75:2:51-2
To Lovers of Garlic, 75:4:125 (Repr.67:2:58)
My Neighbor's Garden, 75:3:83-4
The Lowly Radish, 75:1:16-7
Know Your Seedlings, 75:2:57
Whitaker, Thomas W. & Provvidenti, R.
An Expedition to Collect Lettuce, Part III, 75:1:22-3
VINES
Curtis, Juana
Meet Some Old Friends, 75:5:147
Perry, Ada
What Do You Plant in the Shade, 75:4:111-2 (Repr. 38:1:6)
Wellingham-Jones, Patricia
Ivy Doesn't Have to Mean Algerian, 75:2:39-40

YEAR 1984 AUTHOR INDEX

BLAKE, Dean
September Weather In San Diego County, 75:4:108 (Repr. 24:3:6)
CAIRNS, Thomas
The Hybrid Tea, 75:3:59-70
CARRUTH, Tom
Hybrid Tea High Hopes, 75:3:87-8
CHAMLEE (Witham), Helen
A Primer For Bark Watchers, 75:4:121-2 (Repr. 61:2:14)
CHEW, Ernest B.
Deciduous Magnolias, 75:2:37-8
CLARK, Alice
Pelargonium Parade, 75:4:114 (Repr. 41:1:15 & 61:3:5)
COPE, Skipper
Glamorous Baskets, 75:2:41
CURTIS, Juana
Meet Some Old Friends, 75:5:147
DAVIS, Robert W.
One Gardener's Experience With Sheet Composting, 75:5:140
DUNN, Dorothy
Agaves, 75:1:5-7
EVANS, Hugh
Dwarf Flowering Eucalypti and Rare Grevilleas, 75:4:109 (Repr. 25:7:4)
FAULKNER, David K.
The Ladybird Beetles, 75:3:75-8
FLEMING, Guy L.
Re-Discovering Torrey Pines, 75:4:106-7 (Repr. 8:1;8-9)
GARCIA, Rosalie
Cabbages, 75:5:153-4
Deck the Halls With Holly, 75:6:169-70
Eggplant, The Beautiful, 75:2:51-2
The Lowly Radish, 75:1:16-7
My Neighbor's Garden, 75:3:83-4
To Lovers of Garlic, 75:4:125-6 (Repr. 67:2:58)
The Versatile Sunflower, 75:5:141-2
GRAVES, Walter L.
Grow Your Own Nitrogen, 75:5:157-8
GRAY, Josephine
Harvest And Renewal, 75:5:146 (Repr.61:5:21)
GREEN, Adrienne
Clivia Arrangement, 75:1:10
GREENTREE, Carol
Tricky Little Trichomes, 75:1:11-3
50 Years Ago, 75:2:42; 75:3:89; 75:5:148; 75:6:187
GUNTHER, Bill
Explore A Tropical Palm Canyon, 75:5:149-151
Meet Dr. Geoffrey Levin, 75:5:145
A Plant For Children, 75:1:14-5
The Cosmos, 75:6:177-8
HOTTES, Alfred C.
You Would Like Tigerflowers, 75:4:115 (Repr. 45:1:8)
HOYT, Roland S.
Of The Earth—A Part, 75:4:113(Repr.40:3:1)
JAMES, George
Avocado Trees, 75:4:104-5 (Repr. 69:3:86)
JONES, Barbara S.
Alstroemeria, 75:3:71-2
Fall Arrangement, 75:5:142
LANDON, Raymond E.
Paphiopedilums, 75:2:47-9
LUDWIG, Mike & Macdonald, Allethe
Basic Culture For Indoor Plants, 75:6:175-6
MACDONALD, Allethe
Lively Limitless Lantanas, 75:1:24-5
Popular Indoor Plants, 75:6:171-4
San Diego's Distinctive Herbarium, 75:5:143-4
MACDONALD, Stuart
All About Fire Blight, 75:1:20-1
MACKINTOSH, Betty
Pointers On Photographing Flowers, 75:4:117-9 (Repr. 59:5:14)
OBERBAUER, Thomas A.
Desert Holly, 75:6:179
Rare Plants And Their Value, 75:5:137-9
PERRY, Ada
What Do You Plant In The Shade, 75:4:111-2 (Repr. 38:1:6)
PHELPS, Leroy N.
Some Miniature Agaves and Their Culture, 75:1:8-10
POPENO, F. W.
Avocados For Home Gardens, 75:4:104 (Repr. 3:11:4)
ROUNTREE, Lester
Two Useful Manzanitas, 75:4:108(Repr.23:10:5)
SESSIONS, K. O.
Romneya Coulteri, or Matilija Poppy, 75:4:103 (Repr. 1:1:5)
SHORT, Harvey F.
Azaleas, 75:4:116 (Repr. 57:1:10)
SIEGAN, Sharon
Book Reviews, 75:1:26; 75:2:59; 75:3:159-60; 75:6:189
Heraldic Roses, 75:3:73-4
Home For The Holidays, 75:6:180-1
Is There A Cotoneaster In your Landscape? 75:1:18-9
STREEPER, Dick
Hybrid Teas In The Landscape, 75:3:79-81
THAISZ, Dewey deButts
After Dinner Gardening, 75:3:85-6
TITTLE, Bess M.
Gleaning The Alleys, 75:2:53-4
WATSON, Donald P.
Ornamental Gingers, 75:1:43-4
WELLINGHAM-JONES, Patricia
Ivy Doesn't Have To Mean Algerian, 75:2:39-40
WHITAKER, Thomas W. & PROVVIDENTI, R.
Expedition To Collect Lettuce, Part III, 75:1:22-3
RODGERS, June W.
A Windchime Garden, 75:6:185

POINSETTIA TREATMENT

Poinsettias are lovely as cut flowers if picked when the bracts are mature and treated to stabilize the latex sap in the stem.

A simple method used by a well known arranger and instructor is to place the cut stems in about two inches of vinegar. The arrangement may be made in the vinegar. It is also recommended that excess leaves be removed several days before cutting the poinsettias.

Another method is to rush the cut stems inside, recut an inch or two, and place in three inches of actively boiling water for thirty seconds. Warm vapors from the boiling water may cause injury to the flower bracts if left in longer.

After the boiling water treatment the flower stems are placed in cool water to which one to two teaspoonfuls of household bleach has been added to one gallon of water.

A.M.

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